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Contact:

Abbey K. Bobzin, 630.305.5250
bobzina@naperville.il.us

Holiday exhibit features vintage gadgets “you didn’t know you needed”

NAPERVILLE, IL —Naper Settlement celebrates the kitschy world of early As-Seen-On-TV with its 2018 holiday exhibit, “And It Makes a Great Christmas Gift: The History of Popeil and Ronco”. Visitors will discover the unique Chicago story of inventions and products created by the Popeil and Ronco companies that were marketed as great Christmas gifts from the 1950s to the 1970s. This interactive exhibit features classic products including The Pocket Fisherman, The Chop-O-Matic, Mr. Microphone, and more. This traveling exhibit was produced by the Elmhurst History Museum.

“The wonderful thing about this story is that it’s local and global - it’s fun and yet a marvelous glimpse at capitalism and the approach Americans have towards invention,” said Lance Tawzer, director of innovation and experience at Naper Settlement.

On December 9, in conjunction with the exhibit, the program History Speaks: Popeil & Ronco Chop’d Challenge will merge the history of these companies with a taste of reality TV. Three local chefs will battle to create delicious dishes using popular 1970s kitchen gadgets from the Popeil and Ronco companies. Zac Rogers from Elements, Eddie Sweeney from Catch 35, and Val Insignares from Midici will go head to head in front of an audience to craft the best dish utilizing as many products as possible. Distinguished judges, including Pamela Popeil, the daughter of Popeil company founder Samuel Popeil, will determine the winner of the coveted Golden Veg-O-Matic trophy! The program will include vintage TV commercials, product demonstrations, and audience participation challenges for fun prizes. Reservations are recommended, as this program is anticipated to sell out quickly.

“And It Makes a Great Christmas Gift: The History of Popeil and Ronco” is proudly sponsored by Ron and Claudia Stenger and runs from November 23 to December 24 at Naper Settlement. The exhibit is free and open to the public during Christkindlmarket’s open hours. The exhibit will also be open during Naper Settlement’s regular open hours at the winter admission rate. Naperville residents, members, and children under 4 receive free admission.

About Naper Settlement

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 13 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville. Located 30 miles from Chicago, the museum is home to 21 historical structures dating back as early

as the 1830s. Featuring exhibits, special events, educational programming and more, Naper Settlement is where history comes to play and the community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.